DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 368 276 HE 027 292

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TITLE Reigniting the Flame: TQM Tactics for Faculty Rejuvenation.
PUB DATE 94
NOTE 8p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120) -- Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Accountability; *College Faculty; College Instruction; Faculty Development; Higher Education; Job Satisfaction; Self Evaluation (Individuals); Surveys; Teacher Administrator Relationship; *Teacher Motivation; *Total Quality Management
IDENTIFIERS *Ursinus College PA

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) tactics for faculty development at Ursinus College (Pennsylvania). Emphasis is on the use of TQM to improve the marketing of faculty and institutional achievements. The paper reports that the administration's use of informal meetings has enhanced faculty initiatives in such areas as recruiting new students, mentoring, and improving educational quality. College faculty are urged to be prepared to package and market their achievements before the public and that this requirement is a powerful reinforcement for faculty. In addition, the new demands of outcome assessment in teaching are viewed as a motivating innovation resulting in improved instruction. The college also uses the "Distinctive Teaching Survey" as part of an annual self-evaluation process. This survey permits the faculty to communicate their peak moments in the classroom and has garnered considerable support among faculty. A copy of the survey accompanies the paper. (GLR)

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REIGNITING THE FLAME:
TQM Tactics for Faculty Rejuvenation

Transforming the Marketing Imperative into a Career Boost
(Maybe you can turn a sow's ear into a silk purse!)

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1994

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We can all readily agree that these are trying times for institutions of higher learning. In the 90's, economic, demographic, and attitudinal factors seem at times to be conspiring against colleges and universities. **We cost too much and provide too little, some say**. Such attacks can put even solid, worthy organizations on the defensive. I'm a psychologist, so I hope you'll permit me to use the concept of defense as a metaphor here for a while. There surely is evidence of rampant denial on campuses today. Rather than face the challenges squarely, many professors effect a hasty retreat to ivory towers, insisting that things haven't really changed, and business-as-usual will suffice. They continue to grumble about tight budgets, assuming that the sinister administration is to blame for being a stingy, withholding parent. Talk of budget crises is viewed with suspicion as a manipulative ploy on the part of deans to quiet the masses. There's a credibility problem because many of our schools have been around a long time. At Ursinus we're celebrating our 125th year, and it can easily seem like nothing could really rock so sturdy a ship. But denial can be dangerous. Avoiding acknowledging the real demands of the environment may prevent faculty from responding before it gets too late.

Others prefer a defensive style of displacement and projection. They'll grant that times are tight, and that resources are dwindling, but they direct their frustration and anxiety in ways that aren't very productive. They get absorbed in territorial skirmishes with fellow faculty, and wage a variety of interdepartmental and interdivisional wars. They're mad as hell, and someone's going to pay. Unfortunately, these tough times call for campus cooperation and collaboration more than ever, and many institutions trapped by wastefully draining infighting and destructive competition from within, simply won't make it.

So what are we to do? An edict demanding a less defensive, more productive posture isn't necessarily ideal, because faculty members are famous for responding very badly to orders. This shouldn't be too surprising, since their choice of careers was strongly shaped by the high value they place on autonomy. Fancying themselves self-actualizing great minds (most likely to flourish with maximal freedom, and few distracting, mindless, menial

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required tasks) faculty generally resent being told what to do. They decided early on it would be more fun to be the one GIVING the homework and the tests than the one receiving assignments. And so they became teachers. Additional work assignments are viewed as extraordinarily burdensome when they're seen as cutting into the scarce time you have on this earth for truly Important with a capital "I" scholarly accomplishments.

It's somewhat paradoxical: because we love our high independence jobs and the work we do so very much, we resent our bosses' few demands all the more. We take umbrage at even relatively minor encroachments on our substantial freedom. Some might say we're a little spoiled. Expanded job descriptions may bother those who punch a clock at jobs they truly find distasteful, but these employees seem to take increasing work expectations less personally. They're more accepting of the right of their superiors to move the goal post and expect greater performance. On the other hand, it sometimes seems that professors feel entitled to protection from orders from above. At times, it seems as if they don't even think of themselves as "employees", with "supervisors" whose wishes should be met. So getting faculty to do better work can be a bit tricky. The more they're pushed from above, the more they invest their impressive intellectual talents in reactance and bolstering their opposition to new demands.

The rather miraculous thing is the fact that despite all this opposition to orders, and resistance to authority, the collegial work place of most campuses works as well as it does. Maybe that's because faculty tend to be bright, hard-working souls who will knock themselves out to do an A-plus job when they see the point of what they're doing. So the key to rejuvenating faculty for an optimal response to today's special challenges is to help faculty see that their doing their jobs even better will protect the privileged, autonomous life they relish, and permit future students to enjoy the pleasures of a liberal education. Faculty need to be shaken up a bit, in order to move from the lazy posture of denial. And they need to be helped to steer clear of displaced hostility and projected suspiciousness. And they need to be given the chance to arrive at their own conclusion that self-improvement is a necessity, rather than an option.

I think Ursinus has been quite successful in doing these three things. A review of the management literature on total quality management provided some early clues for us. The TQM focus on consumer-centeredness paralleled the student-centered emphasis on our own campus. The highly participative TQM approach to improvement mirrored Ursinus' collegial style of managing. TQM's emphasis on measuring performance was more new to us, but certainly not alien to those in the social and natural science disciplines. The value of the TQM framework for us had less to do with its introducing any revolutionary new tactics, than with a subtle reorientation that studying the TQM mindset permitted. TQM concepts made it easier to accept the idea that acknowledging the pressures of the marketplace is ultimately not only necessary but

good for a school. It's not a sign of selling out and compromising educational ideals: It's a reflection of growing up and respecting the interdependent nature of our enterprise. We need our students and their parents, as much as they need us. Responding to their real needs will make us better and will permit more effective mutual functioning. In looking more carefully and flexibly at the market, we may even discover a larger role for colleges and universities than we had originally occupied. The chance to change should be seen as an opportunity for growth, not as a threat. Examining what the world needs us to do today, and assessing how well we deliver on our promises, will make us better and prouder.

Attention to qualities that make Ursinus distinctive has led to increased development of these specialty programs. We're already known nationally for providing solid premedical training; now we're discovering the high rate of success of our alumni who go on to law school, graduate study in psychology, and other professional careers. Since so many applicants are looking beyond their bachelor's degree, they're attracted to our programs because they actively guide students through the entire challenging preprofessional process. While we'd always been doing this, the marketing perspective motivated a renewed commitment to careful tracking of each one of our students, which in turn enhanced the undergraduate experience. The name of the game is trying to beat yourself and trying to do it even a little better next year! As long as you establish realistic incremental steps, this strategy can be very satisfying. And I must insert that it clearly works best when faculty have a high level of ownership and control of the new projects they create. Trust them, convince them the need is real, be supportive, and they'll develop fine, innovative programs. Mistrust them, look over their shoulders, and the enthusiasm needed for their effective interactions with students will die. Students don't enjoy paranoid professors, and they'll flee.

The Ursinus administration has relied heavily on increased informal meetings among subgroups, which have helped everyone feel a bit like an insider. This has built a sense of trust, common purpose, and commitment. Negative news has been shared in a modulated way, which has awakened without alarming. Faculty have heard the message, and have shown initiative in developing new ways of showcasing their work. They have organized conferences to bring the campus greater visibility. Others have become heavily involved in recruiting new students. All have committed to more faithful performance of the mentor role to students, as evidenced by a dramatic increase in successful undergraduate research projects. This is very much an ongoing process, and we certainly don't envision an end to our emphasis on continuous quality improvement.

Once these steps have been taken, the good news is that responding to today's demand for greater accountability can make teaching far more interesting and exciting. One of the downsides of college teaching is that in dealing constantly with intangibles, in a manner removed from ongoing peer review, one lacks a clear

yardstick for self-assessment. We all respond to this by developing private means of measuring our success, and take pride in the new classroom tools we regularly develop, but this leaves our efforts terribly reliant on self-reinforcement. As internally directed as many of us are, over time it's hard to keep the fires going. When we started our teaching careers, every class meeting was crucial and elicited emotion (even nausea!). As we got down the routine, that's what it became: more routine. To reignite the old enthusiasm, we need an excuse to care about performance the way we did in our untenured days.

I think that the image of an at times education-unfriendly environment can inspire some good things. It can build a sense of common bond with colleagues similarly under siege from outside the campus. It can make the quality of our performance seem to matter much more than before (now, each lecture and seminar discussion better be a winner; waste can't be afforded!). And it can give us a reason to share our achievements with a wider audience. As distasteful as **marketing** is to many academics, the advantage of the marketing orientation our institutions must adopt today is that in "selling" what we do, we are forced to examine its merit, carefully inspect our efforts for strengths and weaknesses, and articulate our accomplishments in a broader arena And often this translates to getting greater recognition for good, hard work. Faculty like getting A's, they always did (or they probably wouldn't have been the successful students they were required to be to succeed in academe).

The new job requirement for faculty, that they must be prepared more so than before to package and parade their achievements before the public, can be powerfully reinforcing for faculty. It can serve as a new impetus for setting ambitious standards and meeting them. Attention works wonders. Our faculty members are already doing more than we often realize. To a large extent, they really **are** these self-actualizing, inner directed, hard-working, creative people who care passionately about their disciplines and their students. Our coming to them for their help in convincing the world of the value of what they are doing in their interactions with students can give them a valuable chance they deserve to **brag**! And as Bill will discuss shortly, the new demand for outcomes assessment can motivate innovation, and promote a fresh perspective on how to work optimally with students at each stage of the educational process to obtain the most desirable results.

An emphasis on outcomes assessment in teaching can often lead to an interesting quandary. Since measuring educational outcome is already an integral part of every course (we obsess endlessly over exams, trying to hone them into perfect instruments for measuring the results of our efforts), it makes sense to use grades as a reflection of teaching effectiveness. The irony is that when we work harder to engage ALL our students and succeed in helping all do better, when our average grades rise, we feel guilty of committing the sin of inflating grades. We'll need to sort this one out, because while grade inflation is surely a problem, rising

grades can actually be proof of the progress we're making. And we don't want to chastise the most achieving instructors.

In trying to use the marketing imperative we've discussed to revitalize faculty, I developed the **Distinctive Teaching Survey.** It was incorporated into the usual annual self-evaluation process we conduct at Ursinus College. Faculty in my department were (gently and respectfully) asked to reflect on their teaching, and to share what makes their particular courses distinctive and how they would best differentiate them from comparable courses offered at other schools. I was delighted by the care with which my colleagues completed this rather tedious instrument. Their willingness to cooperate stems in part from their unusually wonderful natures, but I think also from the fact that the survey provided them with a vehicle for expressing private accomplishments of which they were appropriately very proud. Normally no one other than their students would have had a chance to see the special instructional materials and assignments they had developed. They are not officially required to share more than their syllabi, and modesty and concern for my time ordinarily preclude them from sharing the detailed elements of their courses that work exceptionally well (naturally the bias of the supervisory process is such that I DO routinely hear when there is the rare mishap, and an assignment is perceived by students as problematic...part of this survey's beauty is that it partially redresses the distortion that this biased review of information introduces, yielding a fairer and more accurate picture of faculty achievement).

This survey permitted the faculty to communicate efficiently about their peak moments in the classroom. It gave me a clearer picture of the great things going on in the department, which makes communication with students, the administration, and external audiences far easier. This survey represents one of myriad approaches we can take to help articulate the quality of what we are doing to the outside community, while simultaneously increasing our internal awareness of campus strengths. This can contribute to an increase in the general sense of pride in the institution, which creates a climate that fosters greater productivity.

If we do it right in higher education, the changes faculty will need to make to help their institutions survive the 90's will pay off for them handsomely. Their ongoing accomplishments will be more responsively recognized and lauded, and they will have a clearer reason to improve upon their delivery of services both consciously and continuously. Faculty will convince us, themselves, and eventually even the outside world, that what they do is precious and good and valuable and worthy, ...and hopefully put to rest for once and for all those dopey jokes about "those who can't do, teach"!

DISTINCTIVE TEACHING SURVEY

Department of Psychology

Ursinus College

Yet Another Demand for Your Time

As midsemester nears (before all hell breaks loose) I'd appreciate your taking an hour or so to help me showcase your work. I know how busy you are, but I'd like you to complete this survey about your teaching. I'm hoping that compiling this information will assist in our efforts to convey our quality and distinctiveness, both externally (i.e., for recruitment) and internally (i.e., to help in advising students).

Thank you in advance for your patience & limitless cooperative spirit. I don't need this back until December 1st, if now is a terrible time to schedule such an introspective journey.

Please Reflect on Your Teaching

What makes your psychology course special (other than your fabulous style and the enviable fac:student ratio we have in most of our classes) ? Please take a few moments to brag unabashedly about any demonstrations, labs, exercises, handouts, films, trips, visitors, special testing procedures, projects, panels, role plays, etc. your courses feature that you feel enrich and enliven your students' experience. What makes your course different from most comparable courses being offered elsewhere.

Fall/Spring What makes my course different from a "stock" course in this area?

List and briefly describe any "special features" you use with some regularity. (please include copies of any written handouts or assignments that you view as "tried & true" successes)
(If you don't yet have flashy labels for your creations, by all means invent them)

Courses:

Psy____

Psy____

Rank order your courses according to their distinction (1=most uniquely special, exceptionally taught of my courses, 7=least unusually taught)	Do you use films or videotapes in this course? (typical # used in course)	Do you use study questions in this course? (Y or N)	Do you have structured labs? (Y or N)	Do you have structured class exercises? (Y or N)